

WISTONCHOMESTEADS IN THE MEADOWS OF THE DAN

"OAK HILL" VA.

A THOROUGH BRED.

A GARDEN SCENE.

IF ONE wants to have a suggestion of "days befo' de wiah," then he must see Oak Hill, the home of Mr. Samuel Hairston. This solid, imposing residence, in its decided Colonial outlines, invites to the mind those happy reminiscences of festive evenings, when the old-time "square dance" was a delight, on ample and mirror-like floors; when there were big crowds, big dinners, big suppers, with company, not just for a few hours, but overnight and all next day, for the fox hunt often followed the dance, and the bay of dogs and the silvery ring of the horn was the recessional music of the fiddle and the banjo. Yes, these memories are revived when, as might be said, one stands in the presence of one of these old homes, built in the early eighteenth century.

Such a residence, then, is this Oak Hill, built in 1825 by Mr. Samuel Hairston, and now owned by a descendant of the same name of the third generation. Situated right on the crest of a high

hill, around which the Danville and Western Railroad makes a graceful curve, and has its trains to stop conveniently for the backdoor entrance; with a wide extent of level land at the foot of the hill to relieve or bring out the boldness of its situation, there is for Oak Hill a landscape setting rarely seen. The magnificent oaks that measure birthdays by centuries are no minor ornaments from nature's hand, for they flourish on all sides of the house and furnish some groves. The work that nature has done for Oak Hill is not all for architectural beauty is brought out in simplicity in the construction of the house. It is a brick structure of straight lines and plain proportions, with Colonial windows and porches with a rocklaid walk from the front gate to the porch, with its accompanying boxwood borders. Inside the Colonial appearance is carried out in the high wainscoting, heavy doors, wide halls, winding stairways and spacious rooms. Antique furnishings and oil

paintings of one Hairston generation after another further impress the idea of the length of days that is a heritage of this mansion.

Other than its situation and the appearance of the residence, there is another charm to Oak Hill. This is its old, old-time flower garden. Here Wordsworth would have been at a loss to have worked into metre the names of such a host of flowers. The winding walks, with their neatly trimmed boxwood borders, are a striking feature, but at every turn and on every side there are shrubs of every name, and in passing the blossoms our grandmothers used to love and care for peer over here and there; evergreen trees towering above all furnish shaded retreats, and a dreamlike rest steals over one as this contact is made with so much beauty and fragrance in flora's bower. A cedar house is one attraction; a mammoth magnolia tree, raised from seed brought from Florida seventy or eighty years ago, holds attention to

another point, but the grove of wild olive trees outlives all else in interest for it has a tradition in the supposition of having been brought from the East by a tourist in the Hairston family. The trunks of the trees and the manner of growth are similar to those of Palestine, but this resemblance is not the only thing to make them worthy of cultivation. Its resplendent lustre of fern-like foliage throughout the year and its lily of the valley-like flowers and beautiful winter berries make it a prized evergreen, as pretty and effective as any for decoration.

This olive grove, magnolia tree and winding walks and oval and square and rectangular flower beds are not all. The view gotten from any of its terraces of the low ground stretching away right to the bank of the Dan, flowing on so slowly as it loth to leave, so inviting a spot, makes for this garden an enchantment equal to its own charms. Visitors often state that its situation and arrangement make it so

beautiful that it must be like the old castle gardens described or painted up by novel-writers.

The present Mrs. Hairston, nee Miss Jopling, of Danville, an adept in the art of entertaining, utilizes its adaptability for "garden parties" and tear in the cedar house, thus affording functions of quaint and rare appointments. As a matter of interest, if not beauty, is a pile of brick in one corner of the garden that marks the site of an old schoolhouse. Here, with the father of the present owner of Oak Hill, "went to school" William A. Stuart and General J. E. B. Stuart, the father and uncle of Hon. H. C. Stuart.

A connection with men of public life is also given to Oak Hill in being the birthplace of the mother of Hon. S. H. Wilson. Oak Hill is now an up-to-date farm, with the house supplied with all modern conveniences, a side annex having been built and hot and cold water supplied. Arrangements are being made for an electric plant

to be put in to light the whole place. The outhouses and servants' quarters are well kept up, and a large, perfectly equipped dairy has been erected, for Oak Hill is known as a stock farm. Its milk cows and Angus cattle, Shropshire sheep and Berkshire hogs claim attention, as well as its thoroughbred saddle horses. This live stock is well supported, for the 2,000 acres attached are in splendid cultivation. Corn yields from thirty to forty bushels per acre, while wheat figures out from ten to fifteen bushels. Large quantities of hay are also raised. The American field wire fencing gives the plantation a cared-for appearance, and in every detail about the farm Mr. Hairston, the proprietor of the place, and one of the largest landowners in Virginia, is characterized by a progressive and successful man in his line of business.

Trinity Episcopal Church, erected mostly by donations from the Hairston family, is a worthy addition to this Oak Hill estate. Regular services are

held once a month, as is the custom of country churches, and a large Sunday school, composed mostly of tenants' children, meets every Sunday, with Mr. Hairston as its superintendent. Near Oak Hill is Berry Hill, the ancestral home of the Hairstons, and is one of the most interesting of the several estates owned by various members of that family, so prominent as landholders and slave-owners before the war. Mr. Hairston, of Oak Hill, has in his possession a grant from George III.

The obsolete appearance of Berry Hill gives it distinction. It is used as a tenant's dwelling, being typically Colonial in size and arrangement, and brings up the household plans of other centuries, so inadequate for modern conveniences. Berry Hill is noted as being one of the oldest places in the Garden of Eden. The Hairston burying ground is at Berry Hill, and the graves of many generations are marked at that place.

Gordon College—How British are Educating Natives of the Sudan

(Copyright, 1907, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

WAY up the Nile valley, so far from the Mediterranean that it takes four days by steamship and railroad to reach it within almost a stone's throw of where whole tribes are going naked, and near the site of what not long since was one of the slave centers of Africa, the English have built up a school which is turning out native teachers and judges, government clerks and bookkeepers, mechanics of all sorts, and within certain limits civil engineers. It has already erected several acres of college buildings, and it has large dormitories, well equipped classrooms, a library, a museum, and also one of the most remarkable research laboratories of the world.

In honor of General Gordon. I refer to Gordon College, which was founded just after the battle of Omdurman and named in honor of the great general who was killed in sight of where it now stands. The suggestion was that of Lord Kitchener, and the money was voluntarily contributed by the people of England. The amount raised was \$700,000, and to this has been added the munificent gift of Mr. Henry S. Wellcome, an American, who has established the famous Wellcome laboratory as a part of this institution.

It was through a note of introduction from Sir Francis Reginald Wingate, the governor-general of the Sudan, to Dr. James Currie, the president of the college, that I was taken through it and given an insight into its workings and possibilities.

The institution stands on the banks of the Blue Nile at the southern end of Khartoum, between the British barracks and the palace of the sirdar. It is a handsome structure of dark red brick with Moorish architecture, running around three sides of a square, with the front facing the river. At the back are beautiful gardens and at the rear of them a sort of experimental plantation, where Dr. Currie is testing whether tea and certain other shrubs can be successfully grown in the Sudan.

The college building is of two stories, with a tower over the center. About the inside run wide corridors or galleries, which are separated from the gardens by great columns, forming colonnades, and under which the long-gowned turbaned students walk between their hours of recitation and study. In the wing at the left of the entrance are the laboratories, museum and libraries, and in the front and on the edge at the right are the many classrooms, which were filled with students during my stay.

A College of Africans. After chatting for a time with Dr. Currie about the college, we took a walk through it, visiting the various rooms. It has now something over 300 students, ranging in age from ten to eighteen or over. The students come from all parts of the Sudan, and they are of all colors, from faces as white as our own to the deepest and bluest of stone black. Many of them have their faces seared with gashes and scars, denoting the tribe to which they belong, and could you read the marks we should find that their homes are located in all parts of the regions tapped by the Blue and White Niles. I saw some who came from the province of the Bahr el Ghazal, away up on the edge of the Congo Free State. Others were from villages in Fashoda, near the river Sobat, and others from the borders of Abyssinia and from the regions along the Red Sea.

like ours. Their noses are straight, their lips thin, and their hair not kinky, although they are black. Such boys are not negroes. They are the descendants of people from Arabia, and their ancestors had reached a high degree of civilization during the Middle Ages, when the Arabic schools and universities were noted over the world.

For the Sons of Sheikh. The college here is divided into three departments. The first is for the sons of sheikhs, and is devoted to the training of teachers for the Mohammedan schools and of judges and other officials for the Mohammedan courts. The British are governing the Sudan as far as possible through the natives. They respect the native religions and the native language, and therefore the instruction in this part of the college is altogether in Arabic. The students are taught the Koran and the Koranic law; they write all their exercises in Arabic, take dictation in Arabic, and are well founded in the Mohammedan religion, and especially as it bears upon the government of the people. They are fine-looking fellows, dressed almost uniformly in turbans and gowns, and they have the aristocratic bearing which shows them to be the sons of chiefs.

After Government Jobs. The second department of the college is filled by those who hope to get minor appointments under the government or by general education to fit themselves for business and private citizenship. In this department both English and Arabic are taught. Many of the boys are young. In one classroom I found a score of brown and black-faced pupils learning to write English and none of them was over twelve years of age. The most of the boys were fez caps and black gowns. They stood up as I entered in company with the president of the college, and then rose to their feet again as we left. In this college surveying is taught. I was shown some excellent mechanical drawings, and some plans worked up from field notes. These were, of course, in the higher classes. The education is thorough, and a boy can get a training that will fit him for almost any branch of life or for any profession which can be carried on in the Sudan.

I was especially interested in the manual training school, which is well equipped with blacksmith and carpenter shops. I found a score or so of young Arabs making various things of wrought iron. They were turning out fences and ornamental iron gates. In the carpenter shops they were making Khafia, ordered that all books should be destroyed. He had no schools worthy of the name, and as it is now not one Sudanese in a hundred can read and write. The officials say it is useless to put up government proclamations unless they station a man beside each one to read it out to the passers-by. At the same time the natives respect learning. They think that anything written must be true, and scribes sometimes go about and extort money by showing documents which they claim are orders to pay taxes by the government.

The British are doing all they can to change these conditions. They are trying to educate the people, and are gradually establishing higher primary schools. There are four schools of this kind—one in Khartoum, one in Sukki, one in Halfa and one in Omdurman. In all these schools the language taught is Arabic, and the children are trained along Mohammedan lines.

I went through the schools at Omdurman the other day. In addition to the higher primary schools, there are seventy or eighty others, and they have altogether about 2,000 pupils. The most of the schools are connected with the mosques, and they teach little more than reading and writing. The other schools give the rudiments of an education along Western lines, and the higher primary schools teach English, mathematics, drawing and other branches as well.

I went through a higher primary school with the Egyptian Governor of Omdurman. It consisted of many one-story buildings running around a walled inclosure. Each building is a school room. The boys study at desks just like those used by our school boys at home, and they have the modern appliances. The students are of all ages, from boys of six, learning to read, to young men of eighteen or twenty, ready to graduate. I heard some of the latter recite in English, and they seemed to me quite as bright as our boys at home. In one room I heard the recitation of a scene from "William Tell," where Gessler makes

the Swiss hero shoot the apple from his boy's head. Four black boys took part in the dialogue. They declaimed in English, and although they had an Arabic accent, they recited with wonderful feeling and with a full appreciation of the sentiment involved in the story. In another building I met some of the sons of the sheikhs and photographed them out in the open. The pupils of all the schools are polite, and their natural ability far above that of the African natives who live farther south.

Founded by an American. Returning to the Gordon College, one of the most interesting institutions connected with it is the Wellcome laboratory. This was founded and is supported by Mr. Henry S. Wellcome, a wealthy Philadelphia, who is one of the well-known firm of Burroughs & Wellcome, manufacturing chemists and druggists, of London. This firm has made a special study of tropical diseases and tropical medicines, and a part of its business is to supply missionaries and exploring parties. It has furnished Henry M. Stanley and others with medical outfits for travel throughout the world. It was probably through the study of such matters that Mr. Wellcome became interested in the Sudan and in its development along health and other lines, and was thus induced to furnish, equip and sustain this great laboratory.

The objects of the institution are to promote the study of tropical disorders, and especially diseases of man and beast peculiar to the Sudan, and also to render assistance to the health officials of the Sudan. The laboratories are carrying on experimental investigations as to the poisons used by the natives, as to the chemical and bacteriological condition of the waters, and also as to everything regarding footrot and sanitary improvements. They are testing and assaying the various minerals, and are looking up all matters relating to the industrial development of the country.

The main offices of the laboratory are in the college, but its explorers are sent out in every direction, and they are making all sorts of investigations. They are looking into the mosquitoes of the country, are investigating the tsetse fly and other pests, and among other things are studying the sleeping sickness, a horrible disease which is communicated by a fly and which has killed its thousands throughout Central Africa. They have to do with the boll weevil and other insects which ruin the crops, and they are aiding the cancer research fund of the Carnegie Institution in its investigations. I have met a number of the scientists connected with this institution, and I find them able men. They tell me that the Sudan has almost every poison and pest known to man and beast. It has worms and weevils which affect the cotton crop, and it has mosquitoes which carry malaria and which would carry yellow fever if they were once inoculated by feeding upon a yellow fever patient. Indeed, the dysentery, or yellow fever mosquito, swarms here, and if one of them should be inoculated with yellow fever germs it might start an endless chain of disease which could hardly be broken.

Money in Gum Arabic. One of the most interesting men I have met in Khartoum is a young American chemist who has charge of the industrial investigations of the Wellcome laboratory. This is Dr. William A. Stuart, formerly of Pennsylvania. He is now making a study of the various gums of the Sudan, as well as of the minerals and precious stones, from the standpoint of the development of its resources. He tells me that the Sudan will some day export grain to Arabia and the other countries about, and that it will in the future be known as a land of corn, wheat and cotton.

He tells me that one of the principal money crops of this part of the world is gum arabic. We know this gum chiefly in connection with mullage, but it is also widely used in the arts. It is employed for making water colors and certain kinds of inks and also in dyeing and finishing silks and other fabrics. Some of the better grades are used in confectionery, and the nearly teeth of many an American Bello have

risen and fallen in the chewing of this exudation of the trees of the Sudan. The gum comes from the acacia trees, and is said to be due to a microbe which feeds upon the sap and causes the gum to exude on the bark in the form of a white, sticky substance, or partially stripped the gum oozes out. It is collected by the native women and packed up and shipped to Omdurman for sale and export. During my visit to the markets of that city I saw great piles of gum which had been brought in there to be sent down the Nile or over the railroad to the Red Sea. There were hundreds of tons of it lying out in the open, and I was told that within a few weeks it would all be on its way to Europe or the United States.

The Story of General Gordon. Just back of the palace in Khartoum, and not far from the college named after him, is a bronze statue of General Charles George Gordon. In it the great hero is represented, sitting upon a camel, which stands on a high pedestal of stone. The general has merely a stick in his right hand, and he is looking boldly and fearlessly out in the direction of the desert. I have been told that he seldom carried more than a stick and that although his whole life was full of danger, he never showed fear.

In talking about this the other night with the sirdar or commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army, he told me an incident illustrative of Gordon's bravery. We were standing on the palace which extends out from the second story of the palace forming the porte cochere, when his excellency said:

There was just about here that General Gordon had his residence. It was a rough building, with windows looking out over the Nile and with the front windows in the plain view of the island of Tuti, which we are now looking at over there. During the war with the Mahdi, the enemy had a camp where they were busy with their shot across the river at the palace. General Gordon kept a diary and it was his custom of an evening to sit in his room back of where we now stand and write. The dervishes saw his light and shot at it again and again. When the natives in Khartoum heard of this they became much alarmed. They feared that Gordon would be killed, and as he was their only hope they sent in a remonstrance begging him to either do his writing at the back of the house or to hide his light by a screen.

In reply General Gordon invited the delegation to come to the front of his palace and stand there. They appeared, they found every front window blazing, and saw General Gordon go down the steps of the palace and stand each for a moment making himself, as the delegation thought, a fair mark for the dervishes. After that he came to stand in the full of the light, said:

"Gentlemen, there is an old story told of how the Lord made mankind. When He did His work He had before Him two great piles of material. One of these was composed of the clay of which man is made, and the other of the clay of which the angels are made. He took up a handful of clay and shaped it into a human form and then sprinkled upon the stuff of which He made me, the breath of life. He has been any produced the body which you see before you. He then looked about for fear, with which to sprinkle the mass, but at that moment the pile of fear had all been used up and there was none to put into me. The result is I do not know what fear is."

General Gordon's bravery. One of others of the world's heroes. He fought here until the last and when the Arabs finally overcame his troops and entered his palace, he sternly demanded of them where their master was. They replied by plunging their spears into his body, and as he fell they dragged him down the steps and there cut off his head to be sent to the Mahdi. His body was left to the mercy of the dervishes, and they turned toward by the thousands to dip their swords and spears in his blood. They speared the body to pieces, and the blood, which had stained the steps and walls of the palace, remained there until the khafia decided to make that place a dwelling for his harm and had it washed away."

Some Curious Wills. A woman who died recently at Rye, near White Plains, N. Y., had kept a prosperous boarding house; her married life was devoted to her husband and her will was read it was discovered that she had cut her husband off with \$1.

"Although I have lived with my husband," ran the will, "I have done as for his wife, and he has been anything to me except a kind and loving husband, but, on the contrary, he has been devilishly cruel and harsh toward me. I have learned to hate and detest him."

An estate of \$20,000 left by Joseph Widewitz, of New York, was devised to his wife, his children and the father of the testator. The will, which was filed in the Surrogate's office, was written in Hebrew. At the bottom all the children had written: "that they were satisfied with the will."

According to the document, \$2,000 was to be reserved as a wedding gift for his widow should she marry a second time.

Can one leave a mental will? Or can a knowledge of the wishes of a deceased person constitute a legal will? According to a decision of a Connecticut judge it can.

Mrs. Mary F. Rose died last year, leaving an estate valued at \$40,000. She made a will leaving her property to charity. After her death the Rose homestead was burned to the ground and the will was destroyed.

The heirs and friends told Judge H. Wittemore Gregory of the contents of the burned will. He admitted the imaginary will to probate.

In a document consisting of 20 typewritten pages George W. Deffenbaugh, who died some time ago in Kokomo, Ind., left \$50,000 to his church if it should elect his spirit a member of the board of trustees. He has been any produced for his widow and children.

According to the will, Deffenbaugh, who was an adherent of Swedenborgian doctrines, believed his spirit would continue to take an interest in the affairs of the church and stipulated that meetings of the trustees were to be held at certain times and his spirit consulted on important church affairs.

Had No Cause for Complaint. After a fight on James Island, South Carolina, in 1862, there was among the wounded a young fellow suffering intensely and making an unusual amount of noise, General Williams, in command, when passing through the hospital quarters, approached the soldier and in a gruff voice asked, "What's the matter with you?"

The soldier pointed to his foot and replied, "I'm wounded."

The General said: "Stop your noise! Stop your noise! There are men lying around with their heads knocked off and not saying a word."

A Texas lawyer who took up farming as a side issue is said to be making \$100,000 a year on 1,400 acres of alfalfa. He cuts his crops four times a year, gets a ton an acre, and sells it at \$15 a ton on an average. Part of the seed is also harvested, and that yields \$15 a ton. The alfalfa revenue received in one year being \$109,200. This does not take into account the income derived from the sale of hundreds of heads of hogs, cattle and other livestock which are fattened in the alfalfa fields.

Throughout the West the crop has been found very valuable to farmers, as it is easy to raise, flourishing in different soils and climates, and is excellent food for stock. It requires no cultivation, growing rapidly after getting well started.

Alfalfa entered this country from Mexico many years ago, but it was not until comparatively recently that its value as a food for livestock was recognized. Its hardy nature makes it an ideal crop for the dry lands of the West, and it thrives there without irrigation. It is now spread all over the country, growing from New York to California, and everywhere apparently making a way for a permanent addition to the nation's agricultural products.—Baltimore News.

Some Curious Wills. A woman who died recently at Rye, near White Plains, N. Y., had kept a prosperous boarding house; her married life was devoted to her husband and her will was read it was discovered that she had cut her husband off with \$1.

"Although I have lived with my husband," ran the will, "I have done as for his wife, and he has been anything to me except a kind and loving husband, but, on the contrary, he has been devilishly cruel and harsh toward me. I have learned to hate and detest him."

An Alfalfa King. A Texas lawyer who took up farming as a side issue is said to be making \$100,000 a year on 1,400 acres of alfalfa. He cuts his crops four times a year, gets a ton an acre, and sells it at \$15 a ton on an average. Part of the seed is also harvested, and that yields \$15 a ton. The alfalfa revenue received in one year being \$109,200. This does not take into account the income derived from the sale of hundreds of heads of hogs, cattle and other livestock which are fattened in the alfalfa fields.



GORDON COLLEGE.

STATUE OF GENERAL GORDON AT KHARTOUM.